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This address points out that the graduates have reached a stage in their lives less for rejoicing than for close examination of themselves and of education as an institution. The students themselves have exposed certain shortcomings of higher education, and taxpayers have become reluctant to support it. Activists of all races have not yet announced limits to their militancy; nor have authorities set limits to their reaction. For some time, the confrontation produced an escalating compromise of demand and concession, but lately, as the demands become harsher, authorities become less patient, and the public condemns both. Matters on which students question society at large include the imposition of prolonged adolescence, the widening gulf between the educated and the uneducated, repression (contrary to all civil rights laws) of the Black community, the presence of ghettos and barrios, the acceptance of war as a political tool, and a nationwide atmosphere of hypocrisy and immorality. Most important is the Black revolution, with its new sense of pride and expectation of social and economic fulfillment. The speaker reminds the graduates that, since it is they who have fomented these revolutionary activities, it is they who must suppress, accommodate, or surrender to them. Such criticisms acknowledge the importance of education and the probability that improvement will follow from a belief in legal equality, civil rights, open-door colleges, and the efficacy of an aroused social conscience. (HH)

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"THE GRADUATE IN THE MIDST OF A REVOLUTION"

Commencement Address
Los Angeles Valley College
June 17, 1969

John Lombardi, Assistant Superintendent
Los Angeles Junior College District

Dr. Horton, Honored Guests, Friends and Relatives of the Graduates, and Members of the Graduating Class:

Graduation from college used to be a particularly important rite in the lives of the young and in the tradition of the institution. Graduation used to be as significant as most of our rites of passage, vying in importance with baptism and circumcision, confirmation and bar mitzvah. Often it was coupled with matrimony.

Graduation used to be a time for considering the particular significance of the education which led to the ceremony. For the instructors, administrators, and trustees commencement used to be a reaffirmation of their commitment to the educational program whose primary purpose used to be the transmission of our heritage through the graduates. For the citizens of this district, commencement used to be a public report of what happened at their colleges since last June. For the graduates, commencement used to "include pleasant memories of the past, exciting plans for the future."

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I have used the past tense intentionally, because across the nation today graduation where it is held, is a time not for rejoicing but for a

disturbing self-examination to discover if what the colleges are doing is significant to the students and to the community which is supporting these institutions. For today, as at no other time in the history of education in America, have so many students and so many citizens questioned its place in our culture. Our complacent confidence in the centrality of education is being severely shaken. The students are in revolt and the community is becoming more reluctant to provide the funds.

Tonight, in addition to extending my best wishes to the graduates, congratulating all who participated in their success, and expressing admiration to those who had the courage to attend a college event of this magnitude, I shall say a few words on the revolution on our campuses, with special emphasis on the revolt of the Black students.

I must add that I have neither a solution to offer nor a definitive interpretation that will explain the reasons our students are in revolt. I shall be satisfied if I can make it understandable.

To assess a revolution which is still in progress is extremely hazardous. The activities of the revolutionaries and their plans are fairly well-defined although no real test has been made of the extent to which they will go to achieve their goals. Neither have the colleges or the civil authorities used all of their enforcement instruments in the conflict.

The colleges have granted concessions and amnesty; they have used persuasion rather than suppression to satisfy all but the most extreme demands. There are signs that their patience is beginning to give way; more ominous that the public is constricting their options for the future.

With this sketchy background, let me get back to our graduates for that is why we are here.

The graduating classes of 1969 have the distinction, honored or dubious, of having been educated during the most turbulent period ever experienced in higher education. Student disruptions have made headlines in our newspapers and have been featured on radio and television programs. These disruptions have brought to our campuses the dissatisfaction, restlessness, and bitterness engendered in the society at large, the ghetto, and the barrio.

These disruptions have made our campuses the battlegrounds of social, political, and racial conflict. So widespread have these disruptions become that they have affected colleges like Valley with a few minority students as well as those with predominantly Black or Brown enrollments. Whenever permitted to do so, our white students whether from conviction, from idealism, or from a sense of guilt have sided with their fellow students from minority backgrounds.

We, the educators, are stunned at the disruptions of so many of our institutions. We find it difficult to believe that anything we have done or failed to do could account for this unhappy condition. Many of us are unwilling to admit to any weakness; but unfortunately for our egos, the students are certain they know our failings and are eagerly telling us about them.

Tonight, I shall single out what I believe to be the basic causes of the revolution carried on in our colleges and universities. And, as you will soon discover, I do not place all of the blame on educators. I would be less than human were I to do so.

The first relates to adolescence and applies to both white and Black students. Two famous scholars have pinpointed this as one of the major causes for the revolution. Bruno Bettelheim, a professor of psychiatry at Chicago said before a Congressional committee:

> "What makes for adolescent revolt is the fact that society keeps the next generation too long dependent in terms of mature responsibility and a striving for independence. Years ago, when schooling ended for the vast majority at 14 or 15 /and/ "one became self supporting, got married and had children, there was no need for adolescent revolt."

(The College Student Rebellion: Book

I suppose, the wife saw to that!

Rene Dubos, a professor of microbiology associated with the Rockefeller Foundation thinks

> "it is a disturbing fact that our society tends increasingly to treat young men and women as children and to deny them the chance to engage in responsible activities precisely at the time when their psychological development is so markedly accelerated."

("Biological Individuality." Columbia Forum 12:7, Spring 1969).

This theme could be expanded. The drive to give the vote to 18-year olds is related to this.

The second major cause, although applying to both white and black students, has more impact on Blacks and other minorities.

It is becoming apparent that a wide chasm exists between the educated and the uneducated. Contrary to popular opinion our colleges are widening the chasm rather than narrowing it. Before World War II, education was not essential for success nor had unskilled and semi-skilled jobs been automated out of existence, although John Steinbeck in Grapes of Wrath gave a preview of what happens to people who lose their jobs and their homes.

The trek of the Joads from the Midwest presaged the greater migration that was to come from the South. Today, education is to success what birth was to nobility in feudal times, and just as it was almost impossible then to surmount the disability of birth, today, it seems almost as impossible to bridge the chasm created by education. Today, the difference between the haves and have-nots is a difference between the highly educated and the poorly educated.

The uneducated do not have to read John Gailbraith's The New Industrial State to discover "the dependence of the modern economy on trained and educated manpower." They know that "had the economic system need only for millions of unlettered proletarians, these ... are what would be provided." (John Gailbraith, The New Industrial State, Boston, Houghton Mifflin 1967, p. 8 and 4.)

How different it was before the Great Depression when Percy Prime told his son, Guy, the hero of Auchincloss's The Embezzler:

> "You mustn't forget that we live in an overpopulated, overeducated world where it's always possible to hire a hack to do the technical job."

(Louis Auchincloss, The Embezzler: Boston, Houghton, Mifflin, 1966, p. 55).

The third major cause I will list relates exclusively to the Black Revolution on our campuses. Many people are at a loss to explain the widespread support Black student militants receive from other Blacks. White people do not understand that the renaissance among Blacks has brought out some sordid chapters from the three hundred years of their association in America. If whites want to know why Blacks are so bitter, why they want to do their own thing, why they are building an appreciation of their culture, why they embrace the slogan, "Black Is Beautiful," the whites must read some of the chapters on the slavery and post-slavery years in America.

This is what the Blacks have been doing and what the Blacks read is not pleasant. If that were all, we might not be in such a serious situation; but even today in most places in America, Blacks are not treated in the same way as whites nor even as other minority groups. We, the whites, have created a caste system by custom and by tradition, despite all of our constitutional amendments and civil rights laws. If we fail to understand this, we fail to understand the revolution. We fail to understand Professor Billingsley of Berkeley who contrasted the conditions of ex-slaves in Brazil where "they were accepted into the free society, not only of the other ex-slaves, but of the whites as well" and the condition of ex-slaves in our country who found it

"much more difficult ... to shake off the badge of inferiority associated with color" and caste.

(Andrew Billingsley Black Families in White America. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall, 1968, p. 59).

Some people get solace thinking that because a Silent Majority exists among white students, a similar situation exists among Black students. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Because all Black students, in fact, all Black people have felt the degradation imposed upon them by the whites, they have developed a sense of peoplehood, a racial consciousness, a racial solidarity. This may help us understand why middle class Blacks expressed such substantial support "for the ghetto uprisings of 1965, 1966, and 1967 in more than 100 major cities."

(Andrew Billingsley Black Families in White America. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall, 1968, p. 11.)

Black students, active or silent, are as one in their determination to secure a respected place in our colleges and in American society.

A fourth and the final cause I shall mentinn tonight is directed squarely against us, the educators. Black and white critics charge us with failing to provide relevant education for the youth of our ghettos and barrios.

We are accused of failing to help these young students out of their depression of spirit or relieving them of their sense of futility. Dr. Charles Thomas, National Chairman, Association of Black Psychologists said:

> "Education has crippled more of us than all of the diseases of mankind."

This is not an isolated indictment of our schools and colleges. Dr. Thomas's statement has been made over and over again in the last decade. Former Commissioner of Education, Howe, in an address to the American Association of University Professors accused the faculty of "fencing out the children of the poor and the victims of discrimination."

As I indicated before, I could add other causes such as Vietnam, the draft, immorality in our society, but these have not had as much influence on the Black Revolution as on white student activism. In fact, for Blacks, war has been a means of escape from intolerable situations and an opportunity to break some employment barriers.

Briefly, here is a summary of my selection of the basic causes of the Black Revolution on our campuses:

(1) the chafing of young people at our prolongation of the period of infancy; (2) the direct relationship between education and well-being in our modern society; (3) the awakening of the Blacks to a sense of pride in their heritage and their culture and the realization that laws and good intentions have not brought about the changes envisioned during the Civil Rights Movement;and(4) the inadequacy of our education for the youth from our ghettos and barrios.

In normal times, I could end this address with a ringing challenge of the unprecedented and glowing future that awaits you, the Class of '69. Would that I could. Unfortunately, you, along with the other Classes of '69, have the added distinction of being the fomenters of a revolution which you will be suppressing, accommodating to, or surrendering to. This is a chilling challenge, not one that can be made into high-sounding phrases.

That you have made our colleges the battlegrounds of this revolution; that you have questioned our relevance in today's society are disquieting and distressing to us. Perhaps, as I indicated earlier this may not be all negative if we accept it as a starting point to build more adequate educational programs. Also, in a sense these criticisms are basically acknowledgement of the importance of education to the dissidents and to the community.

Were the colleges inconsequential to them, to our community, and to our culture they would be ignored.

It is because of this that I have maintained my faith in democracy and education. Despite the serious problems we have today, despite the accusations of ineptness and indifference made against us, I believe progress has been made. I believe that the record will show that this very progress has made possible the revolution now confronting us. If the generation over 30 had not established the legal equality of Blacks and other minorities; if the Civil Rights Movement had not been supported in its various manifestations; if the junior colleges had not been Open Door institutions of higher education, the Black student militants would not be in a position to press for the next step in the process of liberation. The generation over 30 has laid the groundwork for you, the Class of '69, by arousing the conscience of our political and industrial leaders.

You, the Class of '69, will have to perform the miracle of arousing the social conscience of all Americans. But, I must be frank with you. I do not believe you will accomplish this miracle; partly because "the mess we have left you is the problem of bringing the blacks into the mainstream of our society." (Newsweek 73:89, May 26, 1969.) In your generation you may, if you have the will, resist the establishment of a repressive regime and cooperate with the Blacks in the creation of an identity similar to that created by other minorities within our nation.

This may be the intermediate step between our present system of two societies; one, Black, restricted more and more to ghettos - one, white, free to move about at will; and the future system which we now accept as an ideal in our constitution and laws, a system in which all people will enjoy all of the freedoms of human beings.

Bridging this gap between the accomplishments of my generation and those of the generations which follow yours will be an assignment of greater significance to the welfare of our country than any other that I can think of. I agree with the editor of the London Economist who wrote that "the most vital task before America today is to press forward with the breakup of the ghettos and the suburbanization of the negro, at a maximum pace." (quoted in Newsweek 73:89, May 26, 1969)

So to you, the Valley College graduates of the historic Class of 1969, I offer congratulations for your educational success and for surviving the vicissitudes of a troubled campus. Because of your commitment, I know you will accept the task of healing the wounds that afflict our campuses and our nation.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
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